



Targeted Brownfields Assessments

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, Tribes, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA's Brownfields Initiative strategies include funding pilot programs and other research efforts, clarifying liability issues, entering into partnerships, conducting outreach activities, developing job training programs, and addressing environmental justice concerns.

WHAT IS A TARGETED BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT?

EPA's Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) program is designed to help States, Tribes, and municipalities—especially those without EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots—minimize the uncertainties of contamination often associated with brownfields. Targeted Brownfields Assessments supplement and work with other efforts under EPA's Brownfields Initiative to promote cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields.

Under the TBA program, EPA provides funding and/or technical assistance for environmental assessments at brownfields sites throughout the country. A Targeted Brownfields Assessment may encompass one or more of the following activities:

- a screening (Phase I) assessment, including a background and historical investigation and a preliminary site inspection;
- a full (Phase II) site assessment, including sampling activities to identify the types and concentrations of contaminants and the areas of contamination to be cleaned; and
- establishment of cleanup options and cost estimates based on future uses and redevelopment plans.

Targeted Brownfields Assessment funding may only be used at sites as authorized by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, as amended by the Superfund

Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) of 1986. The site must be contaminated or suspected to be contaminated with hazardous substances. Sites contaminated only with petroleum products are not eligible for assistance.

In addition, EPA generally will not fund TBAs at sites where the owner is responsible for the contamination on the site unless there is a clear means of recouping EPA expenditures. Further, the TBA program does not provide resources to conduct cleanup or building demolition activities.

TARGETED BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT ASSISTANCE

EPA may use TBA funds for federal-lead site assessment activities or for site assessments conducted by States or Tribes under existing cooperative agreements with EPA. When EPA takes the lead for a Targeted Brownfields Assessment, it works in consultation with the State or Tribe. Whether the site assessment is EPA-, State-, or Tribal-lead, early and meaningful opportunities for community involvement are generally part of a Targeted Brownfields Assessment.

The TBA program is managed through each of EPA's ten Regional offices. The Regions have discretion in selecting areas to target the site assessment assistance and typically prefer to target sites that: are abandoned or publicly owned; have low to moderate contamination; include issues of environmental justice; suffer from the stigma of liability; or have a prospective purchaser willing to buy and pay for the cleanup of the property,

if needed. The selection process is guided by criteria used to help establish relative priorities among the sites within a Region. The criteria include the following:

- Site control and ownership transfer is not an impediment—preference will be given to sites which are publicly owned, either directly by a municipality or through a quasi-public entity such as a community development corporation. If a site is privately owned, there generally must be a clear means of recouping EPA expenditures.
- There is a strong municipal commitment—either financially, or through commitment of municipal resources for other components of the project.
- There is a clear municipal/community vision and support for property revitalization.
- There are adequate leveraged funds available for cleanup and redevelopment, and/or the site has strong development potential (perhaps demonstrated by past or present developer interest).
- EPA assessment assistance is crucial to the site's redevelopment—lack of an assessment has proven to be an obstacle at the site.
- Existing information supports redevelopment—the site will likely have low to moderate contamination levels, and redevelopment will provide tangible benefits for the community.
- The project area has a clear need for revitalization evidenced by significant deterioration and/or significant environmental justice issues.
- There is clear coordination between the EPA Region and the State or Tribe.
- The TBA is consistent with other EPA/federal agency initiatives—the site has an important link to other EPA/State or EPA/Tribal initiatives; a direct health/environmental threat will be mitigated or site revitalization will serve to spur further beneficial activity in the surrounding area.

SOME TBA SUCCESSES

Old Town, Maine—As a result of EPA's TBA program, four acres of contaminated property on the banks of the Penobscot River in Old Town, Maine will soon be a recreational area with a playground and paths for running and biking. The site's building had been used as a warehouse until the City foreclosed on the property for unpaid taxes. For 17 years the site stood abandoned, as fears regarding suspected contamination and

responsibility for expensive cleanup kept potential purchasers at bay.

Old Town contacted EPA seeking assistance with the site. EPA determined the extent of the site's contamination under its TBA program in late 1996. Following the \$20,000 assessment, the site's abandoned structures were demolished and the contamination cleaned up. While the City funded this extensive cleanup, EPA pursued the former owners for reimbursement of cleanup costs.

Smithville, Texas—Due in large part to the cooperation of two federal agencies, a former metal fabrication plant in Smithville, Texas is now home to a furniture manufacturing company. In 1990 the previous owner filed for bankruptcy on this contaminated three-acre property. Due to its prime location as a possible industrial district in the area, the City marshaled its resources to clean up and redevelop the contaminated site. In 1996, the City contacted EPA to request a site assessment. In addition to the site assessment work, EPA assisted Smithville in acquiring aid from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce and its technical assistance program. The City began site cleanup in the summer of 1996 and completed the process in June 1997. A manufacturer who constructs furniture from laminated panels is currently operating on approximately half of the property, and has created at least seven new jobs.

HOW CAN YOU APPLY FOR TARGETED BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT ASSISTANCE?

Targeted Brownfields Assessments supplement and work with other efforts under EPA's Brownfields Initiative to promote cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields.

The TBA selection process varies with each Region. Each EPA Region is given an annual budget to spend on TBAs. If you are interested in receiving Targeted Brownfields Assessment assistance from EPA, please contact the EPA Brownfields staff in your Region. You can obtain current contact information by visiting EPA's Brownfields web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>, and selecting your EPA Regional Contact from the "Brownfields Contacts" list, or by calling the RCRA/Superfund Hotline at: (800) 424-9346.